1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

A little later they collect *kapani*, the wild bearded rice common in all old rice fields and fallows and at the edges of standing water, by holding a winnowing-fan in one hand and beating the grain of the standing ripe plants into it with the other; the bearded ears are sometimes plaited into '*sela*' fringes for ornamenting doors of houses at the new-eating festivals.

The men are adept in collecting the honey of various kinds of bees, though sometimes, despite forest rules, too prone to save trouble by felling rather than climbing a fine tree. For this purpose, and for tapping palm trees, they often fasten to the trunks of trees long thick bamboos, cutting the side shoots down to stumps four or five inches long to serve as ladder rungs. Gums are collected from many species of trees, for use as bird-lime or in securing the *kosa* silk whipping of arrow-heads, etc. In Dantewara and Bijapur tahsils the Forest Department has quantities of *tasar* silk cocoons collected by Bison-horn Maria men when, in the rains in the intervals between sowing and reaping their various crops, they go out to the forests in search of such delicacies as red ants' nests, ant-eaters, rats, squirrels and grubs. The cocoons are high on sal or *saja* trees; where the climbers cannot reach them they use long bamboo poles with a piece of bamboo fastened at an acute angle at the end to serve as a hook. They get about Rs. 3 a thousand cocoons from the Koshta weavers who employ them; the Hill Maria, however, generally collects only what cocoons he needs for his own purposes. Red ants' nests are cooked, leaves, ants and all, either with *pej* or *gato*, or by themselves and eaten with pulses as a vegetable. They are also a favourite febrifuge; a rough and ready remedy is to shake out the live red ants on to the patient's skull, when the formic acid of their stings is said to reduce the fever; the more elaborate method is to boil the nest, ants and all, and to strain off and use the juice as a febrifuge in small doses; this juice is said to taste sharper than any lime and believed to be invaluable for a long-standing fever. In collecting the palms of the dwarf palms *chhind* (*Phoenix sylvestris*), *P. acaulis*, and *buta chhind* (*P. farinifera*) for use for thatching, basketry or making rough cords for binding fences, the men not only collect the small dates or the flowers (according to season) and the edible pith of the *buta chhind*, but also the fat white grub of a certain beetle, which is also found in the stems of the toddy palm and in fresh green monsoon bamboo shoots. This is eaten fried in ghee or oil with a little spice and chillies, and is regarded as a great delicacy; it is sold in the Jagdalpur market for three or four pice, and even high-caste Hindus buy it. When white ants emerge in flying swarms early in the monsoon they collect them after they have shed their wings, or pull the wings

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

night goes to comb the hair of the boy from whom she desires a present. She does his hair with special care and whispers in his ear, 'Look, boy, I have brought some silver, make me a nice comb'. The boy says, 'I don't know how to'. The girl says, 'But of course you know'. Then the boy says, 'Well, what will you give me? Will you....?' The girl says, 'Never', meaning 'Yes', and the boy makes the comb.

In well-disciplined ghotul a boy cannot give a comb to a motiari without the permission of the Kotwar; sometimes it has actually to pass through the Kotwar's hands. For such a gift seems to be regarded as a very definite and important step in the love relations between a boy and girl, and it is considered necessary by the ghotul authorities to keep a check on such intimacies in case there is any scandal or trouble. To this witness some lines in a Paskna Pata from Bandopal:

> Where did you get a comb like that?
> You got it from the embrace of a chelik.
> One comb for once, two combs for twice.

If a comb is lost or broken, the chelik must make a new one. Otherwise his motiari says, 'How can I comb his hair?' If the Kotwar hears about it, he orders the boy to make one, and he does so at once.

Most combs are made of mahua or karraha wood. Implements used in their manufacture are a small saw, ¾" broad and 6" long, rather like a fret-saw; a *kadri* knife; a *hujji* chisel and a *tatti* adze.

The Kotwar of the Phunder ghotul made a comb for me. He took a piece of mahua wood 2' long and 3" broad, supported one end on a bit of wood and gradually planed down one end, first with the adze and then with his knife. He stood it on end and trimmed the top; then with the saw cut a number of slits 1" deep, measuring them with a twig to ensure that they were even. He cut them again and again to enlarge the slits, leaving on either side of the wood a space uncut.

Now another boy came and held the wood firmly, and the Kotwar cut off 1¼" from the top with his saw, first cutting half through on one side, then turning the wood over and doing it from the other. Finally he broke the piece off and trimmed it with his knife. So far the process had taken half an hour, but the small piece of wood had taken shape as a comb. The boy now spent fifteen minutes shaping the sides, then with his chisel he enlarged the slits again and carefully cleaned the apertures between the spikes. After this, he held the comb in the hollow of his left hand and grasping the chisel firmly in the right and pressing it down hard began to decorate the comb with various patterns. By the time he had finished, he had spent two-and-a-half hours on the work, the greater part of the time being spent on the decoration.

[314] The next morning the Kotwar went to a wild fig tree to extract its sticky, milky gum. He struck a branch with the blunt end of his axe and caught some drops of gum in a leaf-cup. He brought this back and sat down by a fire. He spread the gum on either side of the comb with a bit of straw, warmed it on the fire, applied more gum, laid the silver paper over it and rubbed it in hard with the handle of his chisel till the pattern showed. He repeated the process on the opposite side toasting the comb before the fire by sticking it on the end of his chisel. Finally he brought out the pattern clearly by pressing in the silver paper with his own finger-nails, and washed it with a straw dipped in water.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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Motiari drying mahua flowers at Temrugaon

Motiari collecting and sifting mahua flowers

Plate XCVI